

# Landlord Property Maintenance Guide



Prepared by:

Department of Development Services  
Building and Zoning Inspection Division  
Fairfield, OH

*We* are happy that you have made an investment in the City of Fairfield!

We want owning residential property within the City of Fairfield to be a wise choice for you while providing needed housing for our citizens. The Fairfield City Council recognizes there is a partnership with all property owners to do their share keeping private property up to a standard that we can all be proud of within the community.

As you know there are various responsibilities that you have as an owner of any rental property. Here in Fairfield, we have created these Landlord Guidelines as a handy guide to keep your property in compliance with the Property Maintenance ordinances that are in effect throughout the City of Fairfield.

So that the City has an emergency contact, you are requested to have an Owner's Application on file with the utility billing office (513-867-5300) listing all rental properties within the city limits

The City's Department of Development Services is charged with the oversight of the Property Maintenance ordinances throughout the City. There are currently two full time zoning inspectors and one part-time zoning inspector. These employees are entrusted with the responsibility to take both a "reactive" and "proactive" approach to property up/keep enforcement, including execution of court summons.

Reactive property maintenance act on behalf of a tax payer or tenant who has lodged a complaint with their premises or on other property (usually situated around their home or place of business). Proactive property maintenance entails canvassing various sections of the community to verify there are no property maintenance violations. The theory behind proactive enforcement is to preserve neighborhoods before property maintenance issues have gotten out of hand and disinvestment becomes common place in a particular neighborhood.

One of the first things asked by Fairfield landlords is how to get the utilities in the name of the tenant? When a tenant signs up for utility services (water, sewer, and trash) they must provide the following: a copy of the signed (by both parties) lease agreement stating tenant is responsible for paying the utilities. The tenant pays a \$75.00 deposit, and provides a picture ID (typically a driver's license). ***All*** of these steps must be completed before services will be transferred to the tenants name. Please note that one business day notice is required to process all service order requests.

Other utility service provider phone numbers include:

Cincinnati Bell (Phone)	513-565-2210
Rumpke (main)	513-742-2900
Rumpke (recycling)	513-242-4600
Duke Energy (Electric/Gas)	513-421-9500
Time Warner (Cable)	513-896-5455
Butler Rural Electric (Electric)	513-867-4400





**7**his guide has been developed to help you understand what the Property Maintenance code is and how it relates to property that you own. Fairfield has adopted with modifications, The 2006 International Property Maintenance Code. **You should know your property better than anyone.** The following areas are not an exhaustive list, but the most common issues that seem prevalent in Fairfield, OH. We will start with the exterior premises of the structure. A basic walk around the structure can tell much about the up-keep and the structural integrity of your property.

### **Property Maintenance—Exterior Property areas:**

#### **302.1 Sanitation.**

All exterior property and premises shall be maintained in a clean, safe and sanitary condition. Is the property clean from debris, garbage and rubbish? Common areas that are cited include the areas around the dumpsters especially after an eviction in which the tenant discards various personal belongings. Most of the waste management companies will not take any of these items unless they are in the actual dumpster or unless you make provisions for a special pick-up.

Rumpke Inc will make special pick-ups for a charge .....513-742-2900

Another area that seems neglected by property owners is the open space or isolated areas around the complex. If the litter, debris etc. is on your property, in most cases it is your responsibility to get it removed.



#### **302.3 Sidewalks and driveways.**

All sidewalks driveways, parking spaces and similar areas shall be kept in a proper state of repair and maintained free from hazardous conditions.

#### **304.2 Protective treatment.**

All exterior surfaces, including but not limited to doors, door and window frames, cornices, porches, trim, soffits, balconies, decks and fences shall be maintained in good condition. Exterior walls shall be free from holes, breaks and loose or rotting materials.

This section includes keeping the exterior water tight to prevent the start of mold and keeping rust, mildew or moss from adhering to the surface.

### **304.3 Premises identification.**

Buildings shall have address numbers placed in a position to be plainly legible and visible from the street or parking area. Having these numbers lighted at night or made of reflective material will also help in the case of an emergency. Please remember that we have full-time fire fighters/EMTs on staff 24 hours, seven days a week at three different fire houses within the community. When they are dispatched to your building to help yourself or a tenant, every second counts! Being confused due to non-existent address signage, poor address signage location, or covered address signage will not make the situation any better. Remember every summer to check the landscaping and foliage so that it does not block the visibility of the address signage.

### **304.7 Roofs and drainage.**

The roof and flashing shall be sound, tight and not have defects that admit rain. Roof drains, gutters and downspouts shall be maintained in good repair and free from obstructions. Water seepage is an issue that leads to mold growth. Many times it is attributed to poor drainage from the structure or the grading around the foundation. Storm drainage should be directed away from the building. This has been an issue as back fill around foundations has settled and there may be lack of or clogged gutters & downspouts.

The water sits against the foundation and typically finds its way into the structure.



### **304.10 Stairways, decks, porches and balconies.**

Every exterior stairway, deck, porch, and balcony and all appurtenances attached thereto shall be maintained structurally sound, in good repair, with proper anchorage and capable of supporting the imposed loads. The most common violation is missing balusters or entire railings which allow a child or pet to fall through or over the balcony. Balconies are a place of much outdoor activity. Please stress the responsibility to the tenants as they grill or smoke on the balconies of your properties. Having a fire extinguisher in very close proximity to the balcony is good practice.



## **Property Maintenance—Interior Structure**

As a landlord you and a lease have just so much control over the tenant. Pre-screening tenants, checking references and doing background checks are all important to get the high caliber individual to occupy your property. The interior of the structure and equipment therein shall be maintained in good repair, structurally sound and in sanitary condition. Occupants shall keep their part of the structure they occupy or control in a clean and sanitary condition.

This is a listing of issues that should be checked at the property to keep the tenant safe and the property in good condition:

### **306.1 Handrails and guards.**

Every exterior and interior flight of stairs having more than four risers shall have a handrail on one side of the stair and every open portion of the stair, landing, balcony, porch, deck, ramp or other walking surface which is more than 30 inches above the floor or grade below. Handrails shall not be less than 30 inches high or more than 42 inches high measured vertically above the nosing of the tread or above the finish floor of the landing or walking surface.

Steps are potential hazard in any structure. Keeping the treads fastened and rails anchored will help eliminate the hazards.

### **307.3.1 Garbage facilities.**

The owner of every dwelling unit shall supply one of the following: an approved mechanical food waste grinder in each dwelling unit... or an approved leakproof, covered, outside, garbage container.

### **404.4.1 Area for sleeping purposes**

Every room occupied for sleeping purposes by one person shall contain at least 70 square feet of floor area and every room occupied for sleeping purposes by more than one person shall contain at least 50 square feet of floor area for each occupant thereof.

### **502.1 Plumbing facilities within dwelling units.**

Every dwelling unit shall contain its own bathtub or shower, lavatory, water closet and kitchen sink which shall be maintained in a sanitary, safe working condition. The lavatory shall be placed in the same room as the water closet or located in close proximity to the door leading directly into the room in which such water closet is located. A kitchen sink shall not be used as a substitute for the required lavatory. Typical problems which allow water to infiltrate the structure and become problematic include: the caulking around the tub and a faulty wax ring on the water closet.

### **602.3 Heat Supply.**

Every Owner and operator of any building who rents, leases or lets one or more dwelling units...shall supply heat to maintain a temperature of not less than 68 degrees F in all habitable rooms, bathrooms, and toilet rooms.

### **605.2 Electrical receptacles.**

Every habitable space in a dwelling shall contain at least two separate and remote receptacle outlets. Every laundry area shall contain at least one grounded-type receptacle with a ground fault receptacle. Any new bathroom receptacle outlet shall have a ground fault circuit interrupter protection.

### **605.3 Luminaires.**

Every public hall, interior stairway, toilet room, kitchen, bathroom, laundry room, boiler room and furnace room shall contain at least one electric luminaire.

### **704.2 Smoke Alarms.**

Regardless of occupant load, smoke detectors are required to be installed and maintained at all the following locations:

- On the ceiling or wall outside each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms. Usually the hallway.

- In each room used for sleeping purposes.

- In each story within a dwelling unit, including basements and cellars but not including crawl spaces and uninhabitable attics.

It is recommended that there be at least one fire extinguisher which is operational and maintained in each dwelling unit.

Many times we see equipment that is in bad repair and a health hazard. Unqualified people are working on the equipment and have wired around safety controls and removed the vents posing carbon monoxide problems. Seasonal maintenance, like changing filters, many times is neglected.

**603.1 Mechanical appliances.** All mechanical appliances, fireplaces, solid fuel-burning appliances, cooking appliances and water heating appliances shall be properly installed and maintained in a safe working condition, and shall be capable of performing the intended function.

**Also, anyone installing HVAC, electrical or plumbing alterations in the State of Ohio must be licensed under the state law and obtain the proper permits and inspections. O.R.C 3781 & 4740 respectively.**

**If there are any questions pertaining to permits or code applications, please call the Fairfield Building and Zoning Inspection Division at 513-867-5318.**



# CITY OF FAIRFIELD RENTAL INSPECTION FORM

CODE	EXTERIOR:	P	F	COMMENTS
1329.09	Street Identification			
302.3	Sidewalks			
302.10(7)	Weeds/Overgrowth			
302.10(3)(5)	Debris/Garbage			
304.5	Foundation Walls			
304.7	Roofs/Drainage			
304.6	Soffits			
304.6	Fascia Boards			
304.6	Exterior Paint/Protective Treatment			
304.11	Chimney			
304.15/304.13.1	Doors/Window glazing			
304.13/304.13.2	Window & Door frames			
304.16	Hatchways			
304.9	Fire Escapes			
304.10	Decks/Porches/Balconies/Stairways			
302.10 (4)	Out-of-Use Furniture/Appliances			
1143.09/1143.19	Motor Vehicles			
1143.24	Graffiti			
304.8	Decorative Features			
604.1	Electrical System Hazard			
CODE	MISCELLANEOUS:	P	F	COMMENTS
1187.03(i)	Unpermitted signage			
1309.1(a)	Work Without Permit			
CODE	EXTERIOR COMMON:	P	F	COMMENTS
302.3	Driveways/Parking			
302.7	Dumpsters			
302.10 (1)	Fences/Walls			
303	Pools			
CODE	INTERIOR COMMON	P	F	COMMENTS
305.3	Interior Surfaces			
305.4	Stairs & Railings			
306	Handrails & Guards			

*Copy of the inspection form to be used for proactive inspections on multi-family structures.*

## **Landlords' Responsibilities**

Know and understand the terms and conditions of the lease.

Assure that the property complies with all building, housing and health codes which significantly affect health and safety. Fairfield uses the 2006 International Property Maintenance Code.

Make all necessary repairs to make the property livable. This includes keeping all electrical, plumbing, and heating and ventilation systems in good working order.

Supply adequate hot and cold running water and heat at appropriate times.

Keep all common areas in the building or on the grounds safe and sanitary.

Give at least 24 hours notice before entering your apartment or house except in case of emergency. He/she may not abuse their right of access to inspect the property, deliver packages, or show the property to prospective tenants or buyers. Landlords **may not** enter without proper notice and can be held responsible for any damages or injuries caused by their trespassing.

## **Tenants' Responsibilities**

Know and understand the terms and conditions of the lease.

Pay their rent in full when due.

Keep the property safe, sanitary and clean.

Keep all plumbing fixtures clean and free flowing.

Do not damage the property & do not allow guests to do so.

Keep appliances in good working order as outlined by the lease.

Allow the landlord to inspect or show the property, make repairs at reasonable times with a least 24 hours notice or immediately in case of emergency.

Comply with all local housing, health and safety codes.

## **City of Fairfield Information at your fingertips...**

The seal of the City of Fairfield, Ohio, is a circular emblem. It features a central shield with various symbols: a sun, a gear, a book, and a star. The words "FAIRFIELD, OHIO" are written in a circle around the top, and "55" is at the bottom. The word "Opportunity" is written in a larger, stylized font across the bottom of the seal.

Building and Zoning	513-867-5318
Customer Services	513-867-5351
Development Services Department	513-867-5345
Finance Department	513-867-5315
Fire Department	513-867-5379
Municipal Court	513-867-6002
Parks Department	513-867-5348
Police Department	513-829-8201
Public Utilities Department	513-867-5375
Public Works Department	513-867-4200